

# Aim

To understand the importance of women winning the right to vote.

## Success Criteria

- I can describe some of the events which led to women being given the right to vote.
- I know some of the important people in the campaign to win the right to vote.

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 I can explain how we are remembering the 100th year of women winning the right to vote.

### What is a Vote?

A vote is your chance to have your say. It lets you make choices to change how something happens, who is in charge, or how something is run. A vote is made to choose something fairly.

A vote is a very important right, as it means that your opinion is being listened to and respected.

We are very lucky nowadays, because we all have the right to vote in decisions at school and later in adult life, in decisions about how our country is run.

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However, in the past, this was not the case.

## The Suffragists and Suffragettes

Before 1918, all women were not allowed to vote in general elections. Although some men thought women should have the right to vote, most men were against it. Many women weren't happy about this and wanted to be treated fairly and equally to men. At this time, there were two groups who worked hard for women's rights to vote.

The <u>Suffragists</u> tried to persuade people in charge locally and across the country to give the vote to women. The <u>Suffragettes</u> went further, and even held illegal and violent campaigns to try to win the vote.

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### **Emmeline Pankhurst**

The leader of the suffragette movement was Emmeline Pankhurst. She was born in Manchester in 1858. Her parents were very interested in politics and she was just 14 years old when she was first involved in the fight for the women's vote.

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In their 'Votes for Women' campaign, Suffragettes became known for arguments and angry behaviour, including smashing windows and hurting police officers. Along with her daughters, Emmeline spent time in prison where she even stopped eating to try to win the vote.

#### **Millicent Fawcett**

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Millicent Fawcett was born in Suffolk in 1847, but she went to boarding school in London. She led the largest peaceful suffragist group, the National Union of Women's <u>Suffrage</u> Societies.

At 19 years old, she went to a speech by the Member of <u>Parliament</u>, John Stuart Mill. She was inspired by his support for women's rights and joined his campaign.

## Votes for Women

In 1918, the Representation of the People <u>Act</u> gave all men over 21 years of age the right to vote, as well as some women over 30 years of age.



That same year, women were allowed to vote for the first time in a general election.

This was also the first time that women over 21 years old were allowed to put themselves forward for an election. This meant that if they were voted for, they could become a Member of Parliament (MP).

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## What is Vote 100?

2018 is the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Representation of the People Act. To mark this special event, Vote 100 is a project to remember the laws and events which brought about equal votes for men and women.

There will be online exhibitions and a big public exhibition in Westminster Hall in London. The project looks at the fight for equal votes through the creative arts and is a celebration of women's suffrage.



# **Celebrating 90 Years of Equality**

Between 30<sup>th</sup> June and 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018, people can celebrate our equal rights to vote with a cup of tea and slice of cake.\*

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This will mark the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act which finally gave men and women full equal voting rights 10 years after the Representation of the People Act.

\*EqualiTeas is a nationwide chance to share experiences of democratic equality.

### Think About it

100 years ago, women won the right to vote. Think of all the ways in which you are allowed to vote. What have you voted for? Who held the election? How was your vote made? How was it fair?



What could your class vote for next?

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